GREENWorks

Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

A publication of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Concord, NH (603) 271-3710

February 2016

Don't Let your Tire Pressure Become an Environmental Deflategate!

When was the last time YOU checked the tire pressure on your vehicle? As the quarterback of your car, checking your tires' pressure should happen frequently, at least monthly and anytime there has been a major temperature shift, to ensure your vehicle is safe, is achieving its maximum fuel economy and to improve the comfort and performance of your ride. Taking this quick and simple action will benefit both your wallet and the environment.

While there are no officials checking, there are some basic rules to keeping tires properly inflated. Following these rules will be advantageous to your vehicle's performance:

1. Always check your tire pressure when the tires are cold - first thing in the morning, before it has been driven is ideal.
2. Use a tire pressure gauge; don't try to "eyeball" it. Under - and over - inflation, even as much as 30%, can be hard to see. It is better to purchase your own gauge rather than rely on the one at the gas station that may not be accurate. You can get a good gauge for less than $10.
3. Inflate to the recommended pressure. Look for proper inflation information on the sticker on the driver's side door pillar. Front and rear tires can have different pressure recommendations. Do not inflate to the maximum pressure shown in the sidewall of the tire.
4. When it's time for new tires, consider purchasing tires with "low rolling resistance," an energy-saving feature.

There are other game-changing benefits to maintaining proper tire pressure:

Fuel Economy and Environment - According to the U.S. Department of Energy, low tire pressure may be costing you the equivalent of an additional 5 cents per gallon of gas! Inflating tires to their proper pressure can improve mileage by about 3.3 percent, whereas leaving them under-inflated can lower mileage by 0.4 percent for every one PSI drop in pressure of all four tires. The more fuel you use, the more pollutants you emit. Every gallon of fuel burned releases over 20 pounds of carbon pollution into the atmosphere, along with other pollutants that cause smog and harm our health.

Drivability and Safety - An underinflated tire bends more as it rolls, building up heat, possibly resulting in loss of steering precision and cornering stability, or worse – a blow-out.

Underinflated tires have reduced center-tread contact with the road, increasing the chance of hydroplaning in wet conditions. Underinflated tires can also be slower to respond and require more steering. On the flip side, overinflated tires can sometimes improve steering response, but they can also cause a harsher ride. Because overinflated tires are stiff and reduce the amount of tire in contact with the road, potholes and debris can easily damage the tire and potentially cause problems with your suspension. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that thousands of injuries could be prevented each year if drivers would inflate their tires to the correct pressure.

Improving your fuel economy by 3% by keeping your tires properly inflated doesn't seem like a major scandal. But when you consider that there are 8,887 grams of CO_2 emissions per gallon of gasoline and that, in the U.S. alone, there are over 255 million vehicles that drive an average of 13,474 miles per year, it's a safe bet to say that keeping your tires properly inflated can help to eliminate millions of pounds of pollution from entering our air. So be a team player and keep those tires at the correct pressure at all times.

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